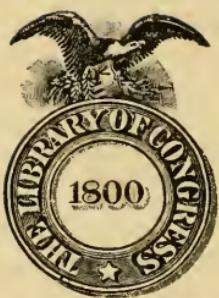


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AN
ANNIVERSARY ORATION,

DELIVERED ON THE 13TH OF APRIL 1836,

AT THE REQUEST

OF THE

JEFFERSON SOCIETY,

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA.

BY O. N. OGDEN,

OF LOUISIANA.

Charlottesville:

PRINTED BY JAMES ALEXANDER.

1836.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, APRIL 20, 1836.

SIR,—

WE are a committee appointed to transmit to you the following resolution, adopted at the last meeting of the Jefferson Society of the University of Virginia :—

Resolved, That the thanks of the Jefferson Society be presented to Mr. Ogden, for the able manner in which he discharged the duty imposed upon him, on the occasion of the late anniversary celebration of the Society, and that a copy of his Oration be requested for publication.

Respectfully,

H. B. TOMLIN.

L. P. CRAIN,

C. C. WATKINS.

O. N. OGDEN, Esq.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, APRIL 22, 1836.

GENTLEMEN,—

Your note of the 20th. instant is before me. Please communicate to the Jefferson Society my unfeigned thanks for their flattering kindness. In compliance with their request a copy of the address is placed at your disposal.

Respectfully,

O. N. OGDEN.

Messrs. TOMLIN, CRAIN, and WATKINS, Committee.

E 3rd
8th

Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the Jefferson Society.

WE are assembled, on the day of our anniversary celebration, to indulge in the reflections suggested by the occasion, and to cherish the endearing associations, and renew the sacred recollections connected with the memory of THOMAS JEFFERSON. Where is the eye which does not glisten with the fire of olden times, and whose the heart that swells not high with pride and patriotism at the enunciation of this name ? One which does not call to mind the pomp of Courts,—nor one sounded amid the boasts of heraldry, or the titles of aristocratical distinction and princely favor. The name of a Republican citizen and Statesman ! Virginians !—born in the land of his birth, living in the country rendered classic by his life and labors, treading *now* the soil consecrated by his ashes, and breathing a moral atmosphere warmed and illuminated by the fire and splendor of his genius, which, even from the grave, sheds, like the absent sun, a light upon you not the less its own because reflected from the institutions to which it had given birth and brilliancy,—well may *ye* revere his name, and well may *ye* be proud to hear it spoken—But genial and general as the pervading presence of day was his influence,—and his fame, co-extensive with his usefulness, cannot be monopolized. Where, from the headlands of Maine to the shores of Louisiana,—from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains,—is the American who does not claim as his countryman the author of the declaration of our Independence ? Where, throughout the world, is the Philosopher and Philanthropist, the advocate of equal rights and enemy of civil and religious tyranny who does not point proudly to him as a fellow-man, and hail, with triumphant joy, the period of his existence and endeavors, as one of the brightest and most glorious epochs in the history of the human race ? In the “palmy days” of Rome many there were whose virtues and talents won them the merited esteem and confidence of their countrymen ;—many the Senator, and many the Chief whose councils or whose courage, had served well the State,—and

claimed, for wisdom, or “lofty deeds and daring high,” a grateful nation’s best reward. On these were preferment and high command conferred,—to these the honors of the triumph oft dereed. A voice and vote in the government of the empire of the world, or a high station in its victorious armies, were well worthy the efforts of ambitious aspirants; while the spoils and captives of conquest, the gold and gems of the East, the costly ornaments of art, and the trophies of genius—all increased the splendor of the processions and pageants with which their successes were celebrated. The crowded streets—the waving of plumes and banners—the glare and glitter of burnished steel—the noise of the chariots—the tramp and neighing of the war steeds, and the shouts of the populace, mingling with the notes of triumph that burst simultaneously from a thousand instruments—the magnificent temples and imposing ceremonies, affected powerfully the senses, and might well have encouraged the patriotism which, in addition to the gratulations of conscience, received rewards like these. Cicero is said to have been prouder of a triumph with which the Senate honored him for capturing a petty fortress, than of the more substantial honors of his consulate, or the glory of detecting and suppressing the conspiracy of Cataline—or even of having pronounced before the most august assemblage of the world the more than eloquent oration in which he has conferred an odious perpetuity upon the memory of this second Erostatus, more atrocious much in his crime than the first, who would, in wanton wickedness, have sacrilegiously destroyed the proudest temple which man, in the fullest fruition of his most cultivated powers, had ever erected to the Genius of civilization. In the middle ages the enthusiastic chivalry of the knights and nobles found sufficient recompense in the smiles of the fair, and the songs of the minstrels. Each country boasted its warrior saint—every castle its legendary hero. And now, in later times, presents, and place, and pensions, and medals, and crosses, and stars, are proffered to bribe men to the performance of their duty, or perhaps oftener to its abandonment, which according to cabinet maxims and payment is sometimes the most meritorious: while a splendid funeral awaits alike him the brilliancy of whose talents, and the purity of whose morals, have embellished and elevated the character and institutions of his country, and the wretch who, immortal in infamy, will live till the end of time in the just and honest execrations of all good men. The relics of England’s heroes repose, in the vaults of Westminster, beside the haughty and selfish prelates and worthless lordlings whose

name and birth, and usurped station,—have enabled them thus, with a presumption unabated even in the grave, to invade the empire of the illustrious dead, and intrude their clay upon the resting place of virtue and genius. Here however the case is different—The great men of *our* country have honors more congenial to the spirit of the age, and better suited to the principles they profess, and the motives which actuate them,—honors too that cannot thus be prostituted by royal favoritism. Their triumphs are not the pomps and pageantries of cities. We carve no useless statues to remind us of names too deeply inscribed upon our hearts for us ever to forget them: we rear no splendid mausoleum, and engrave no funeral record, to perpetuate the remembrance of men and deeds, whose memory is as imperishable as it is glorious. To monarchs and their minions we have left these last and vainest mockeries of mortality which seek to continue even to the tomb, the silly show of empty greatness, and send to its depths the mighty ones of earth anointed and attired for the feast of the worms, and the corruption of the charnel-house. In the welfare of his country our patriot's promise is spoken; his fame is perpetuated in the development of its resources, the dissemination of knowledge, and the perfection of the happiness of the people. Of him we may say, truly and emphatically,—his country is his monument—its history his epitaph! And surely no more fit, or prouder monument to the memory of her heroes and statesmen could we find than the wealth, the power, and the universal and unparalleled prosperity of America—no more eloquent eulogy than her history during the last half century.

It is both profitable and pleasant to turn at times a glance upon the past, to call before us the scenes in which our father's played so well and nobly their parts,—to study their characters and investigate their motives,—to compare what has been with what is, and thence endeavor to infer the future. These retrospections will enable us to keep more steadily in view the great designs of the founders of our government, and the high duties to whose performance the spirits of the mighty dead loudly and earnestly invite us.—They will also tend much to soften the asperities of party differences; as while looking on the graves of our sires, we must lay aside our unfortunate jealousies and unhappy prejudices in the proud contemplation of the greatness and glories of our common ancestors. Should the worst anticipations of the bitterest enemies of freedom be unfortunately realized—and America, a prey to civil dissensions, be prematurely “decayed in her glory, and sunk in her worth,”

her happy institutions overthrown, and her liberties wrecked, in the storms of intestine strife, the past a light still will shed which, flashing far into the surrounding gloom, will illumine again the horizon, and paint in rainbow hues upon the before darkened sky, the celestial sign of hope and promise.

On the new continent, the moral and intellectual creation seems to have been fashioned after the same bold sublimity of outline, that characterised the works of external nature. Our magnificent mountains—sunny skies, and mighty rivers, were appropriate scenes and inspired fit associations for the regenerators of the world, whose minds,

Nourish'd in the wild—
Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the roar
Of cataracts, where nursing nature smiled,"

acquired a growth and expansion which unchecked by the restraints of prejudice ripened freely into the fulness of a glorious maturity. Resistless as the storms that swept the land were the moral energies roused into action by the oppression of England. The soil of the soul seemed here fresh and fruitful as the fertile fields, whose spontaneous bounty almost rivalled the productiveness of Eden. The blighting influence of arbitrary power, and the noxious weeds of court corruption, were not here to wither the germs of genius in their incipient growth. The founders of our political faith, refusing to regard ancient errors with superstitious veneration, cast all prejudice aside, and guided by reason and nature only, sought rather to effectuate what ought to be, than to preserve what had been, inviolate from innovation. The aspect of the social world, previous to the era of the American revolution was one of peculiar interest. It had seemed as if some sinister influence was ever to retard the progress of improvement. And the Philosophers who overlooking, or endeavoring to explain, the slow advance and frequent retardation of the march of mind, had hoped still to witness in man's future fortunes, the happy realization of the utopian visions which they had beautified with the gay forms and brilliant colorings of poetic imagery, saw at last, with despair, the disappointment of their most cherished anticipations, and were compelled with pain to confess that a near approach to perfection seemed forever forbidden by the hindrances of passion and prejudice. The alternations that marked the material creation seemed not less natural to the moral world. And the changes of this last were more numerous and inconsistent far than those of the first, as they depended not on the fixed and regular laws of matter,—but on the impetuous, untameable and ever varying impulses of the

human heart. Although the sun of civilization might shine to-day on an unclouded prospect, warming into beautiful existence the flowers of hope and fancy, expanding the noble feelings and generous susceptibilities of the soul, and making the desert of human nature to bloom and blossom as the rose, some moral Sirocco would often pass to-morrow with desolating fury, and shroud in darkness what before was bright. The extent and duration of mental improvement seemed, like the continuance of animal existence, to have prescribed a limit which, though not always or every where invariable was seldom much exceeded, and like this too, to bear with them the principle of their own destruction. Cities had sprung up, navies floated, wealth abounded and prosperity prevailed, only to be succeeded by the desolation of savage conquest. The pomp, and pride, and power of the eastern empires had passed away,—their temples were destroyed—their palaces unroofed,—and only by the architectural evidences which lay in chaotic confusion on the face of the desert, could travellers appreciate the wide spread ruin. They whose retrospective glance has rested on the successive seas of sentiment that have swept over the earth since the earliest dates, have seen customs of long continuance, and legislative institutions, whose wisdom had promised a duration commensurate with their usefulness, hurried, with a rapidity which baffled all speculation as to the immediate cause of their destruction, among the wrecks of the ruined and lost. They have seen the fickle breath of popular opinion, and the ever changing current of religious creed, effecting alterations in theory, and in action, so numerous and varied that the rapid hand of history can scarce record them, as they in one moment appear, and in the next are borne away, to be in turn succeeded by others perhaps still more at variance with all that preceded. Contemplating the world since the march of empire turned westward from the principalities which had proudly reared themselves in the land of the sun, and whose power and splendor were equalled only by the completeness of their ruin, and the horrors that attended their subversion,—how infinite are the mutations of character, and the vicissitudes of fortune which are presented us! Nations with laws and customs as different as their names and origin, arising on every side, flourishing for a time, and fading from view,—religions and revelations, advancing doctrines scarce more at variance with each other than with reason and truth, every where gaining credence. Now Greek,—now Roman passes in review before us—the Acropolis now towers into sight,—and now the portico and

pillars of the Pantheon greet the eye!—Now we hear the confused cries and tumultuous noise of the “fierce democracy” of Athens—and now behold the stately Senate of the Imperial City, deliberating on the fate of nations with a dignity and decorum, worthy at once of the majesty of the assembly, and of the interest and importance of the occasion which convened it. A change again comes o'er the scene! The patriot voices that echoed in free and fearless eloquence through the spacious hall, in which sat the Roman Senate are silent now! The soul which animated their orators,—which dictated the downfall of the Tarquins, and ordered the doom of Caesar, has fled forever! And if perchance some neglecteds park of the fire of yore, fanned by the Spirit of Freedom, who eager and anxious hovers above, vainly hoping to re-ekindle her deserted altars, should threaten to light up the darkness which tyranny and superstition have spread around the iron shod foot of armed and relentless Despotism, soon tramples it in the dust! A tyrant, enervated by luxury, and inflated with pride and presumption, directs the destiny of Rome. No generous conspirator now is found to avenge his country—no Cato even dares to die!

“ So sleeps the pride of former days,
 So glory's thrill is o'er,
 And hearts that once beat high for praise,
 Now feel that pulse no more.”

Another change awaits us—another scene in this eventful drama is in progress. The northern barbarians whom the degenerate Romans had subsidized to defend them against enemies, whose anger their own tyrannical rapacity had aroused, now, with a just retribution, prey upon their unworthy employers. Their attacks cannot be withstood by a people who, long accustomed to the servile bondage of their Emperors, have lost in the infamy of ages, all the hardy virtues of their progenitors. The downfall of the tyrant Emperors is achieved—the Augustan throne prostrate;—but no cheering cries of liberty do we hear! No wise Brutus—no virtuous Publicola spring forward to guard and guide the State. Even the license and tumult of a city without a ruler, would be preferable to the fierce shouts that ring around, and the violence and indiscriminate massacre which mark the unequal contest between the polished people of Rome, and the ferocious hordes that riot and revel in the first city of the civilized world. The scene closes, and the curtain drops, hiding horrors unparalleled in the bloodiest annals of time. Another act is ushered in—all traces of the recent contest have vanished; and a despotism strange and most stupen-

dous now appears: it is the tyranny of opinion—the hopeless slavery of the mind. We see now neither Roman Emperor nor vandal Chief. The pure and pious principles of christianity, have been perverted by an ambitious clergy.—The sceptre has yielded to the crosier. Rule from Rome, the quondam queen of the world, seeming most natural and legitimate the Church places her throne in the decaying palace of the Cæsars, whose magnificence she soon emulates, and whose power she soon surpasses. She collects the scattered remains of royal rule which the barbarians had trampled in the dust—and snatches from the ground the weapons that had been dashed from the nerveless grasp of imperial degeneracy. Jerusalem, once destroyed by Roman armies is raised from its ruins—becomes now the sacred city of the new religion, and embellished with the poetic fictions of a superstitious fancy, attracts crowds of worshipping pilgrims, more numerous far than the legions which once levelled its walls, and slaughtered its citizens. Increasing in power and rapacity, the church soon substitutes force for persuasion, and thousands fall victims to a bigotry as cruel as unjust.

Similar events elsewhere occur. Mahomet spreads with fire and sword his doctrines on the plains of Arabia: and before the turf is green on the grave of the Prophet, a schism ensues among his followers, and Ali and Omar expound, on the battle field, his faith with the same weapons with which he had before inculcated it. Persia and Turkey embrace the opposing creeds, which are here subdivided into factions equally bitter and bloody in their hostilities. While in Europe the usurpations of the Catholic Church, increasing with surprising rapidity, were more extensive—and far more fatal to the hopes and happiness of mankind. Rome had embraced within her limits all the most civilized nations of the earth. Greece was subject to her sway ;—and the lieutenants of the Emperors ruled the most distant and powerful provinces. Her dominion extended every where ;—and her codes of law spread now over almost every country in Europe, attest the wide dissemination of her institutions, and the extensive influence of her civil polity. When the Empire became a prey to the barbarians, their devastations were not confined to Italy. They spread themselves throughout nearly the whole extent of Europe, “pouring (says a French historian) in a thousand destructive torrents through the land, —sweeping away and overwhelming in a mass, life, property and laws.” The energies of men seemed prostrate, and the bonds of their union severed. The wisdom and learning of centuries were, in a moment; merged in the debasing igno-

rance of vandal barbarism. The two great divisions of the Empire were parcelled out among a thousand petty Princes warring continually with each other. It is worthy of remark, that again the fate of the world was dependant on Rome. For scarcely had Europe began to recover from the shock of the northern hordes, and the waves of revolution to subside, when the Catholic Church, extended, from Rome, its rule over every neighboring nation—wielding, in the moral and religious world, a sceptre more powerful than the sword of the Cæsars—and exerting an influence far more extensive and fatal than that of Attila. The Christian Priests not contented with Europe, turn their eyes to Asia. The superstitious, they point to the land printed with the foot-steps of Prophets, and consecrated with the blood of Martyrs and the sepulchre of a God—to the avaricious and ambitious, the wealth of eastern nations, and the crowns of “paynim princes” are proffered—while to the charitable and chivalrous, are painted in glowing colors the wrongs and sufferings of their injured brethren, and the present glory, and future reward of victory over the infidel enemies of their faith. Hundreds of thousands, of every age and sex, and condition of life, are hurried from their homes.

“Banditti saints disturbing distant lands,
And unknown nations wandering *to a tomb.*”

Their bones now moulder on the plains of Palestine, an instructive memento of popular fanaticism, and sanctified rapacity. In times still later, Kings and Priests, and their interminable disputes, boundless ambition, and insatiable avarice, are still the curses of the world. The Christians quarrel among themselves, and the smoke of inquisitorial fires, blackens soon their horizon. The wars against the Waldenses and Albigenses, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew, have left them little to say about the persecutions of Nero—while the feuds of the rival houses of York and Lancaster in England, and of the Guelphs and Ghibellines in Italy, and the wars of the succession in Spain, crimson with fraternal blood these unhappy countries. Such were some of the sad scenes that history presented—and surveying these, faint indeed, must have been the hopes of the friends of humanity! But future years were not destined to roll on in one eternal cycle of misery to man! A recognition of his civil rights was ere long to be written in the blood of Kings, and liberty of conscience soon to be proclaimed in a voice that was to be heard above the thunders of the Church.—There is a near and necessary connection between civil and religious tyranny. When man consents to abandon a por-

tion of his legitimate rights, he is easily persuaded to give up all. When he entrusts to one set of men his future fate, he will readily submit to another his present fortunes. The mind once deprived of its native dignity and independence, is easily debased ; accustomed to dictation—it revolts not at despotism. Kings have ever been in all countries, the warmest and firmest supporters of the Church, which last has in turn sustained zealously their pretensions—pronounced divine their right to rule, and with gracious gratitude, consecrated them while alive, and canonized them when dead.—All history proves the truth of these assertions. The greatest impetus given to mental advancement, was undoubtedly by the reformation of Martin Luther. The decided stand made by this bold and eloquent man against Church despotism, and the unanticipated success with which he waged an almost hopeless war against the wealth, the talents, and the political influence of the clergy, opened the eyes of men to the extent of their own power, and the miserable weakness of their spiritual masters. This prepared them to assert their civil rights—Henry the Eighth, in his contests with the Popes, gave to the people of England the turn of thought, and experience and consequent courage, which afterwards prompted, and enabled them to wrest the sceptre from his successor. The first out-breaking of the storm which shook the palaces of Europe, was the revolution by which Charles the First lost his crown and his head. Terrible as was then the burst of popular fury, and ruinous to the lives and fortunes of some who fell victims to principle and patriotism, as was the revolutionary strife ; the horrors of that eventful period were not without their use. Like the tempest which sweeping along with destructive force, prostrates alike the mansion of luxurious profligacy, and the dwelling places of the just and virtuous—levels the forests, and desolates the fields, and yet hurries away with it the threatening clouds that had obscured the heavens—purifies the atmosphere, and prevents the pestilence which would secretly, but surely, have worked in silence a more extensive ruin—the storm of the revolution, swept from the political horizon the gathering cloud of royal prerogative, which had obscured the light of reason, and cast on the state the darkness of despotism, and purified, in part, the prejudices which long had shed their corrupting influence on the morals of the people. England claimed at last to be free. She had aided, and in fact, effectuated the Lutheran reformation. She had dethroned a King, and made a propitiatory offering of his blood to the spirit of liberty. She had done much, but not enough.—

Though she had checked the Catholic Church, it was but a change of masters. The vacant throne, with all the regalia of ecclesiastic rule, was given to an Episcopacy which had all the tyranny, without the greatness of the Romish See.—She had murdered Charles the First, but the Divinity, whose presence and protection she sought to win, asked not, nor would a sacrifice like this. A right so bloody was offensive to her peace and purity; and the high Priest of the ceremony soon turned his sacrificial sword against his country. The result might easily have been anticipated. Liberty had in one moment degenerated into licentiousness—in the next the reins of power were tightened into despotism. Scarcely had the shouts of the mob around the scaffold of Charles, ceased to pain the ears of the friends of order, when the welkin rang with “long live the Lord Protector!” Cromwell though a tyrant, was a wise and fortunate ruler; yet no sooner had the success of his administration proved to the astonished world, that if Kings have a divine and hereditary right to rule; others may have at least the genius to govern, and shown the people to what a pitch of power a Chief of their choice could carry them than they were again anxious for change. The bells that tolled for his decease, soon sounded merrily for the restoration. In a few weeks the people were willing, and even impatient to bind on their own arms the chains of the Second Charles, a tyrant worse and more dangerous far, than was his royal sire. The tyranny of the King and Church combined, continued through successive reigns, had before compelled our Fathers to fly from evils which were intolerable, but also irremediable by them. Yet they had not escaped entirely.—Tyranny prepared to pursue them—and the eastern breezes soon bore to their startled ears, the clank of her chains. Well *now* might the friends of civil and religious liberty have despaired! Hope however, still remained, though all but hope had fled! Our ancestors had brought with them here the principles of the reformation, and had cherished the remembrance of Sydney and Hampden, long after the countrymen of these illustrious patriots had ceased to honor their memory. It is pleasing to trace to the excess of usurpation and injustice their overthrow. The English government had, in prosecuting its ambitious schemes of conquest, and in furnishing supplies for the lavish expenditures of the court, well nigh exhausted the resources of the country. The ministers looked with greedy eyes upon the wealth of the American Colonies. With Kings, to desire, *had been* to possess; but a lesson was in store for them. A British Parliament had before dethroned Charles for attempting to seize on the monies of the people,

without the consent of their representatives :---and *now* the principle of taxation without representation, was at once resisted by the stern and sturdy descendants of the Puritans. The remonstrances of the colonies seemed at first to have some weight with the government ; but the temporary concession of the ministers soon proved but a suspension of their demands, until the means of enforcing them could be devised. They thought to force our Fathers into submission ! What ! were the people of America, after having been compelled to abandon their country, and exchange the comforts and endearments of home for the dangers and inclemencies of a savage wilderness, to be followed to their sanctuary, and oppressed and injured even before the altar which, unaided and unfriended, they had erected and dedicated to civil and religious freedom amid the difficulties and disasters of poverty and pestilence, and surrounded by a thousand savage tribes, even more cruel and relentless than their royal and priestly persecutors at home ? No ! Thanks to the God who heaped an ocean on Pharaoh's hosts, the attempt was vain ! The Pilgrims, unlike the Israelites, had brought with them neither gold nor jewels---liberty was their only treasure, and of that their children would not be despoiled. "There is" indeed "a point beyond which forbearance ceases to be a virtue"---beyond which submission is unnatural and cannot endure ; and the anger of those urged to resistance by a sense of duty, and the consciousness of wrong, though sometimes "still as the breeze" is always "dreadful as the storm." It was not the thunder of the cannon, nor the thrust of the bayonet---not the armies of France, nor the monies of Holland, that achieved our liberties. A moral revolution was already effected long before the signing of the treaty of Paris, before ever the declaration of our independence was drafted. The elevated patriotism which was abroad in the land, and the deep determination, that every where prevailed, to resist aggressions, to whose resistance conscience commanded and interest invited, could never have been conquered. The revolution commenced almost simultaneously in all the colonies. Mr. Jefferson had but lately arrived at manhood. Yet young as he was, he had already given proofs of that genius, and of those virtues which illustrated in after life, the history of his country. He was, even at this time, a prominent person in Virginia, one of the wealthiest and most influential of the colonies. The non-intercourse resolutions of the people of Massachusetts Bay had called upon them the anger of the British Parliament, who immediately authorised the King to send an army to reduce "*the rebels*," as

they were already termed *to obedience*. Mr. Jefferson who was then a member of the Virginia Legislature, proposed an address to the monarch, and counter resolutions, making common cause with Massachusetts. This measure which was instantly adopted, may be considered the commencement of the American Union. During the contest which ensued, Mr. Jefferson was always active—ever earnest and efficient—serving with the same distinguished zeal in the Legislative and Executive departments of Virginia, and in the Continental Congress. It was well that in the celebrated Congress of '76 there were men superior to the prejudices of the times—men whose perception of what was good, and great and glorious, was the inspiration of nature. First and foremost among these was Thomas Jefferson. The character of the man, the nature of his exertions in Congress, the philosophic scorn with which he regarded the presumptuous paradoxes of hereditary and irresponsible power ; his devotion to his country, and his enthusiastic love for rational liberty, are all displayed in the eloquent paper which you have just heard. Never was human nature more triumphantly vindicated than there. Congress having declared that the colonies, united in the declaration, were, and of right should be, free and independent States, saw that a government was necessary which should secure that unanimity of design and action on the part of the States which only could enable them to oppose with success the armies of England : and they accordingly proceeded to the accomplishment of this object, in the midst of a dangerous and disastrous war, with a coolness and calmness worthy of the heroism of storied times. There was here no royal house from whose sons to choose a leader, no Louis Philippe to betray his family and then with consistent duplicity, turn traitor and tyrant to his country ; and they whose necks the yoke once had galled were not at all disposed to submit again their fortunes to the capricious clemency of a King. *Quidquid delirant reges plectuntur Achivi*, had been often called to mind since the days when Agamemnon and the son of Thetis quarrelled before the walls of Troy. And the sad experience of mankind, since the institution of society, had inclined the people of America to believe that they would be themselves the best guardians of their own happiness, and the ablest advanced of their own interests. They ceased to credit the vaunted patriotism and philanthropy of those who, busy in pushing their own fortunes, would fain have persuaded them that their only object was the good of the people, denying to these by their acts, the right of liberty, and yet, in their professions erecting, like

the French Philosopher at Ferney, a temple with a pompous inscription, to the divinity of whose existence their whole life and labours had been a denial. Commencing with the simple and sublime truth, now an axiom here, that all men are created free and equal, they determined that all political power resided ultimately in the people, and that it was for their benefit solely that society was formed and government instituted: and that as the people were thus the source of power and the only party interested in its exercise, it was both just and expedient that they should retain it to themselves.

As it was obviously impossible for the people to govern in the mass, a responsible representation seemed the best method of giving action and effect to the government, and of preserving at the same time the privilege of the people.—This admission of the right and expediency of popular supremacy, with the modification adopted, naturally suggested that the delegation of authority should be for a limited time, and that this authority should return sufficiently often to the people to enable them to exercise a real and not merely a nominal supervision over their agents. The sovereignty of the people was the basis of the articles of Confederation first adopted by the States, through their Representatives in Congress. The war of the Revolution was conducted by the Federative government acting under the authority of these articles. I will not detail the familiar history of the times. The victory at Yorktown silenced forever the claims of England. The articles of Confederation were, however, soon ascertained to be in a great measure inefficient, as they acted not upon the people generally, but only on the State governments. The distinctive character and feelings of the people, caused by the early settlement of the country, under its several and separate colonial rulers, attached them closely and warmly to their State governments; while the differences of policy resulting from diversities of climate and situation made the idea of consolidation still more repugnant,—and taught them to regard, and justly, the Federative feature of the Union as at once the palladium of their civil liberties, and the talismanic protector of their pecuniary interests, and political prosperity; but if consolidation was disagreeable—and dangerous to the interests of the nation—the weakness consequent upon an imperfect union, was soon found to be equally unsatisfactory, and even more immediately and palpably detrimental. Although while the war gave one direction to the hopes and feelings of the whole community supplies were cheerfully and readily furnished, it was found necessary, after its termination, when there was no longer an

object of universal interest to concentrate the aims and energies of the entire people, that the general government should be made more independent of the States. Congress with its almost infinite array of specified powers was actually unable to provide the means for the fulfilment of treaties duly made, and ratified by the government. To effect the requisite alterations many and serious difficulties were to be overcome. Already had those prejudices developed themselves, which, under different forms, have several times since threatened the subversion of the government. The number of separate States, and the conflicting interests originating in their geographical position, or springing immediately from their different local institutions, rendered it extremely difficult to devise a constitution which, without violating sectional policy and prejudices, should promote the purposes of general welfare proposed by the Union. A form of government which should not offend the jealousies of State sovereignty, and should at the same time give sufficient strength and stability to the national councils. Difficult as was this undertaking it was speedily accomplished. In the formation of our present constitution a wonderful wisdom, and profound knowledge of human nature, with a most intimate acquaintance with the peculiar character and circumstances of our country are displayed ; and this is the more astonishing as its framers were mostly men who had grown to greatness in the war of the Revolution, and who, in the tumult and turmoil of the battle and camp, could had but little time to devote to the studies of the Cabinet. Our government bears no trace of the strife from which it sprang. Like the fabled Phœnix our Eagle issued from the flames with plumage unscathed by the devouring element. The leaders of armies became the founders of an almost unrivalled system of civil policy. The Federate form of the Senate satisfied the scrupulous pride of the smaller States, while the larger ones were willing to yield this, in view of the *proportional representation*, in the other branch of the national legislature. These, and other mutual concessions prepared the people to receive and ratify the instrument. I need not, in addressing those who enjoy its advantages, dwell upon the peculiar adaptation of our government to the purposes for which it was designed. Religious liberty has been secured to us by the establishment of our civil rights—and we enjoy the advantages resulting from a dissemination of Christianity—an enlightened system of ethics, and a consequent elevated standard of morals, without any of the evils and abuses which unfortunately attended it in other times and countries—evils and abuses

which were, however, in every case, chargeable not upon the religion itself, but solely on those who perverted its principles, and stained with the bigotry of their own selfishness the divine purity of its character and precepts.

The American people were not ungrateful, and fortunately their rewards enriched both giver and receiver. General Washington and John Adams had both been called to the Presidency of the Union, and now on Mr. Jefferson, after he had filled successively the offices of Minister to France, and Secretary of State, was conferred this highest honor in the power of the people to bestow. He continued throughout the whole of his career the earnest and able advocate of the principles which he had in early life professed; and retired from office, at the close of a second term, with the proud and happy consciousness that all his patriotic aspirations were in the progress of speedy fulfilment.

It would, however, be contrary both to reason and to experience to suppose that our government is perfect, or that the people will be always, and every where, ready to abide by its laws. Perfection is unfortunately not of earth. Our Constitution, carefully worded as it is, is not without obscurity of expression and uncertainty of implication sufficient to occasion, if not to justify, doubts and differences of construction.

Questions have arisen, concerning the powers of the General Government, and the sovereignty of the States, in whose discussion, feelings of ancient ill-will, and the suggestions of a selfish policy, which regarded more the petty interests of a limited time and sectional character than the lasting good and glory of the whole country, were called into action by influential men, and urged with a zeal and earnestness which would have been praiseworthy and heroic in a better cause, and to promote a nobler purpose. But if these occasions gave rise to gloomy forebodings, they have also afforded examples of attachment to the public good and disregard of self which should strengthen much our most sanguine hopes for America.

We saw on one of these the author of "*The American System*" voluntarily sacrifice to peace and union, a scheme which he had been laboring for years to perfect,—one which even those economists who are opposed to the theory and principles on which it is based, have acknowledged to be the worthy offspring of a gigantic genius—and one which he had sustained with all the strength and constancy of his unequalled mind, and all the earnestness of his enthusiastic soul,—

at the very moment when, from its successful operation, he had hoped to realize for his country the profit and prosperity, and for himself the fame which he had struggled so hard to obtain for both.

Peculiar indeed must be the circumstances, and urgent the cause, that would justify an attempt to destroy the American Union.

It is unfortunately too true, however, that the period *may* soon arrive when a dissolution of this Union will be inevitable, when no *compromise* can prevent the separation of a people, the bonds of whose union are cemented by the blood of a common ancestry shed in a common cause,—and whom it were sacrilegious to disunite.

Clouds are gathering in our horizon.—The black materials of hate and havoc,—ungenerous jealousy, and fanatic fury, are rife in the Northern sky. None can deny these threatening indications of a storm. Party purposes have doubtless magnified much the danger to which I allude: but, be this as it may, the evil is great, and increases with fearful rapidity. Religious enthusiasm is certainly the most powerful impulse that can ever operate upon the human mind.

The excitement never relaxes, but is always on the increase,—as its cause is constant, and as the power of this to excite, augments in a direct ratio with the near assimilation of the mind to a state of mad fanaticism.

The strength and continuance of this excitement prevent the occurrence of any suggestions of reason, or any prudential considerations; while the consciousness of rectitude of intention, which always sustains the religious enthusiast will arm him with fortitude to struggle against all opposition, and dispose him to encounter cheerfully the dungeon,—the rack,—steel and the stake,—ambitious of martyrdom, and glorying in the greatness of his tortures.

This species of enthusiasm actuates many of those who are at this time most active in agitating the question of slavery, and it is their influence that is most to be feared. But a vast majority of the lower classes of the agitators are doubtless influenced by the jealousy of incipient agrarianism.

The laboring orders of the Northern cities do not see without jealousy the wealth and luxury of their merchant masters.

But neither the time, nor the circumstances, are yet such as to originate an active manifestation of this feeling—their superiors “*are still at least their countrymen.*”

The jealousy is natural however,—does certainly exist, and

is easily transferred from the capitalist of the North to the planter of the South. The South is an Eldorado, to their imaginations, so far as wealth and its comforts and luxuries are concerned. And while toiling daily in occupations more menial than the labors of the Southern slave, they think of "*the lordly and lazy planter*," of whom they have heard, with a jealousy embittered much by a sense of their own degradation.

Sectional prejudice makes them careless of injuring *him*, while thus, more from jealousy of the master than even from their unnecessary and officious sympathy with the slave, whose situation is, in most respects infinitely better than their own,—they join in the cry of "universal emancipation"—a cry which, unless the increasing intelligence of the people prevent it, will, when time, and a surcharged population, shall have wrought their usual effects, be changed even at the North into a loud and fierce demand for an equal distribution of property. This may seem to some rather the extravagant suggestion of an excited imagination, than a probability deducible fairly from the facts, and sanctioned by experience, but the same feelings will prompt the latter which cause now the former. Let us then be vigilant—and let the Northern legislatures interpose their influence for our present protection, and the future safety of the North. In vain do they now cry peace to us while we know, too well, there is no peace. Inaction on their part is encouragement to the levellers and as injurious to us as active interference in their favor would be.

The North should be told that much as we value the Union, and dear to us as are the associations connected with it, its only intrinsic excellence is its adaptation to the ends for which it was designed. These are the mutual and general good, and the protection of all. It was never intended to be a means of bringing about the ruin of half its members—nor will, or can, the South suffer it to last long enough for this to be effected through its agency.

The North should know that self preservation is the first law of nature; that no compact can bind a people to consent to their own destruction; and that when the alternative is presented us—which God forbid—of having our rights violated, our property taken from us—and the security of our fire sides disturbed—or of severing the bonds that tie us to them, we will erase from the Constitution the names of its Southern signers who never contemplated this most unjust perversion of its principles and perjured abandonment of its compromise conditions.

The North should now be told explicitly that if forced so to do we will without hesitation or delay avail ourselves of the light which has lately burst in *serene* splendour from the *West*, and carrying the doctrine a short time since elucidated in so happy and *forcible* a manner in the *Virginia Legislature*, and on the floor of the United States Senate, farther than was perhaps intended by its *able* and *eloquent* expositors, "*expunge*" the South from the Confederacy "*by drawing black lines*" of perpetual demarkation between ourselves and those who in their real, or pretended zeal for another race will have then forgotten all kindness and courtesy to their countrymen, and have shown no mercy to a people of kindred color and fraternal blood. The very principles and motives which originated the Union will then command its dissolution.

But we have been told that much reliance may be placed on the intelligence and liberality of the majority of the Northern people. This perhaps—probably—is so; but while expecting these to arrest the further progress of the evil, the South should be itself its own friend,—*it must be the best*. The Southern people even if confident should not be careless, or lulled by false promises of protection into a fatal forgetfulness of their danger.

A returning sense of right at the North may do much for us—*self interest more*—but the firmness and vigilance of the *United Southern People* will constitute our surest safeguard. Here the question naturally occurs—to what sources are we to look for the perfection and perpetuation of the advantages which we enjoy from our government. The obvious and immediate answer is—the integrity and intelligence of the people.

In all times and countries to improve the moral and physical condition of the people, will naturally be one of the first objects of government. But the ulterior motives for this amelioration must be different under different circumstances. With despotic governments the origin and limitation of the effort may be generally referred better to selfishness, than to a philosophic philanthropy.

If the views and designs of many royal benefactors of their country, be subjected to an investigation which in its progress is not biased by any favorable prejudice arising from a consideration of the good that has been done, we will find them much less noble and disinterested than they at first would seem. Such an analysis will also lead us to the conclusion that they would seldom, unless accidentally, originate that kind or degree of improvement suitable to the

true happiness and dignity of human nature. The true end of man's existence is the cultivation of his powers, and development of his faculties—with the attainment of that happiness, and comparative excellence, consequent upon this cultivation and development. The inevitable result of this would be the destruction of irresponsible power throughout the world.

Educate man—refine his feelings—elevate his views—relieve him from the prejudices of royal and religious rule—restore him to the dignity from which he has been debased, and you will soon find that he can, *and will* govern himself. A consciousness of equality would every where prevail, and this with the mental power and moral courage which would at once occasion and accompany it, would raise champions on all sides, willing and ready to assert, and able to maintain the rights of man. This the monarch would be careful to prevent—while he would be desirous at the same time to improve the people to a certain extent, and to develope the resources of the country as his subjects are his instruments, and the power of the people the measure and standard of his own strength and influence. This last consideration does not identify his interest with those of his subjects, because of the reason and limitation before mentioned; for he is conscious that it is a dangerous thing for the people to be too powerful or too much enlightened—and thus, fearful lest too well informed of their powers they should enquire into their *rights*,—he seeks to impose a limit on the advance of intellect by restrictions of the press,—forbidding freedom of debate, and abridging liberty of conscience.

Peter the Great did much to improve the social and political condition of Russia. But was the illustrious autocrat influenced as much by a generous and disinterested wish to improve the people *for the people's sake*, as by the promptings of a policy which told him that it was only by remodeling the institutions, and changing the character of his country, that he could place himself on a par with his brother sovereigns—only thus emulate the fame of Gustavus Adolphus or, which was a matter of more moment, oppose the arms of his warlike descendant, the cotemporary of the Russian Czar? No!—the politic Peter saw in the power of the surrounding potentates, and the advancing fortunes of Sweden the importance of adopting those very measures which, with an increase of territory, and the natural improvements of time, have made Russia the proudest and most powerful of the European principalities. Schemes of conquest and the hope of renown all urged him to place him-

self and his people in a situation to further the first and acquire the last. Thus stimulated by the prospect of present power and future fame, he was indefatigable in his exertions. It was for these that he toiled in the workshops of Kings whom he hoped afterwards to conquer—for these that he raised St. Petersburg, upon the unhealthy borders of the Baltic, and summoned to the capital of his quick creation, all the painters, and poets, and teachers, and artizans, and men of science, whom his treasures could command—or his genius and reputation invite.

The late Emperor of the French achieved much for France. Yet he but improved a property snatched from the hands of the Bourbons—a property over which his right was more undisputed, and of which his possession was more perfect and absolute than those of the long line of Kings before him: and all the augmentation of its wealth, and increase of its resources consequent upon his government—all the glory gained in its battles and all the splendour and spoils with which he ornamented and enriched its capital were more for the Emperor than for the Empire.

But in a republican country, and with a democratic government, very different are the motives for improvement. It is a proud and pleasing reflection that while other legislators were disputing about the capacity of mankind for self-government, or giving their tardy and qualified assent to the proposition, the founders of *our* government, unimpeded by their prejudices—surmounting easily the obstacles which seemed mountains to their frightened fancies—and measuring mankind by themselves—placing thus a higher estimate on human nature than Kings could possibly have done—based our institutions immediately on the virtuous will and enlightened understanding of the people.

In a monarchy or with an aristocratic government, where the sovereign power resides permanently in the hands of one man, or of one particular set of men—and where all public officers are selected from a few families influential from birth or wealth, the business of the state may be wisely and successfully transacted even while the people are sunk in ignorance and vice.

The Capital may be the home of science and the arts, the birth place of genius, and the favorite haunt of poetry and eloquence, while the wretched inhabitants of the surrounding country have scarce made a single step towards civilization.

The court of the great Northern Emperor is perhaps the most brilliant and polished in Christendom, while the misera-

ble degradation of the *Russian serf* has long been proverbial: nor can the splendors of St. Petersburg or Moscow affect so strongly the beholder as do the desolation and horrors of Siberia, or the moral night and winter, impervious to the light of mind, which “reign eternal” in other of the imperial provinces, rivalling the dreary perpetuity of their snows.

But in a country where there are no prejudices of caste to determine who shall govern—where there are no statutes of entail to confine the transmission of wealth to a prescribed course of descent—but where, so far as the operation of the laws is concerned, property is equally divided, and consequently the advantages of education extended equally to all; and where, lastly, the rulers must come *from the people at large*—these last should be enlightened *in the mass*, to secure a proper administration of public affairs. Our offices are, from the circumstances of equality before adverted to, open alike to all. The lawyer, the farmer, the physician, the merchant, and sometimes the *soldier* may alike be called to high and important places of civil trust.

It needs then no elaborate argument to prove that the necessity of educating the people generally, may be deduced from the very nature and intention of a representative democracy. The people are indeed here virtually their own rulers. Their right they exercise at the polls. If their votes be governed by considerations of public policy they should surely be able to form aright, opinions which are to affect vitally their interests—to decide promptly and properly on all the subjects presented them for their consideration, and to appreciate the excellencies or see the defects of every plan of legislation proposed by their representatives. If on the other hand personal partialities guide their suffrage, they should know how to distinguish between the true friend, whose manly advice springs from an honest heart, and the sycophant who is now their slave, that he may be afterwards their master—who Judas-like betrays with a kiss—who deludes their judgment and inflames their passions with insidious discourses, and slanderous abuse of those whom he knows are his superiors in every thing that should constitute a man and a politician, and who are yet unfortunately, in a great measure at his mercy, as they will not, *cannot* stoop so low, or soil so much the purity of their souls.

It is indeed a source of regret and mortification that the people of this country do not discriminate better between those from whom they choose their rulers. And to what is this to be attributed? Evidently to the ignorance and folly of the majority of the people. Our judgments must be al-

ways only comparative. Man is capable of an almost infinite approach to perfection, and as he approaches more nearly to this perfection, his faults are made more manifest, by the high estimate which his character commands, as blemishes on the brightest objects are rendered more visible by the surrounding brilliancy. It is with a view to what the people here might be, *and should be*, that we pass judgment upon what they are. Can it be for a moment supposed that if they were universally enlightened, they could tolerate their noisy demagogues, the audacity of whose falsehoods and misrepresentations is equalled only by the insulting confidence with which they are uttered? Who can look with any other feelings than regret and indignation at the numberless excitements and "*panics*" with which partisan politicians have of late so often succeeded in blinding the people to the true issues before them? Their most sacred rights and dearest principles are made the instruments with which to injure them. Every thing that is true in theory, or wise in practice, is pretended, and the most glorious names and inspiring associations are invoked—to promote a party! Inflammatory speeches are delivered, and violent newspaper paragraphs penned—the people are hurried along by passion and prejudice—they do not pause—they will not think—their continual excitement precludes the possibility of calm reflection. Instead of performing properly the duties assigned them, the Legislatures of the different states often pass the most of their time in party manœuvres, while the people are unfortunately contented to see thus their interests neglected, that their delegates may dispute about their own. The science of legislation would indeed sometimes seem to have here degenerated into a system of office seeking, and the floor of the Assembly to be transformed into the arena, in which the eager competitors, their dignity debased, and all honorable and generous feeling lost in the *circean* intoxication of an avaricious ambition, maintain a ceaseless struggle for a paltry prize. Here where the sovereignty of the people is the fundamental principle of the government, we see them forgetting their rights, and forsaking their duties, and prostrating themselves, with a folly as fatal as that of the worshippers of Juggernaut, before the demon of faction—to be crushed as he rides in rude riot through the land. All parties must agree that these assertions are true; but each one will tell you perhaps that the fault lies with the rest; that the principles and practice of their opponents produce this deplorable state of affairs. Can we not however, go farther into the *causas rerum*? It is natural that politicians should

use every effort to promote their purposes. Selfishness is an original principle of man's nature; and although, when refined and elevated by the enlightened and liberal policy which sees the interest of each in the good of all, this principle may be, and often is, the origin of virtue, and of a benevolence which, taking its color from the accompanying feelings that purify it, we might truly term disinterested, it unfortunately happens that most men do not perceive, or cannot properly appreciate the practical philosophy of the golden rule, and are unable to resist the impulse of personal motives, or withstand the temptations of their immediate interests. We cannot be so visionary as to anticipate the day, and look for the land, when and where, each man will be at once a philosopher and a philanthropist, and the selfish strife of party be succeeded by the generous competition of universal benevolence. This we could expect only in some fancied time like Saturn's fabled æra, or in some poetical paradise of a poet's imagination, whose sunny skies are never clouded, and whose balmy airs teem with the freshness and fragrance of Eden, with angels to breathe these airs and bask beneath those skies. At such a time, or in a utopian clime like this, might these things be—but not now, and never on earth. Acquiescing then in the natural and necessary operation of the passions and selfish ambition of men, and blaming no party exclusively, let us look deeper for the origin of the evil. Were the people better informed the shallow artifices of intriguing demagogues would be easily exposed, and all their attempts rendered unavailing. This would produce a two-fold benefit—the people would be no longer deceived, and politicians finding it now impossible to force them by their passions would try the gentler and more worthy method of persuading and convincing their reason. Instead then of the rant and senseless violence which usually characterise the address of the representative to his constituents, we would have the sound argument, and logical deduction, of a man well acquainted with the subject of discussion, and at the same time aware that he can attain his end better by candour than by casuistry.

There is an agent, however, still more powerful than the tongues of our politicians, in active and pernicious operation among us—an agent too whose evil influence nought but the intelligence of the people can correct. I mean our party press. I say that nothing but the good sense of the people can correct its licentiousness, because no legislation on the subject can possibly be effectual or should ever be attempted.

Mr. Jefferson said to Baron Humboldt, in a conversation with this celebrated traveller and philosopher, concerning a slanderous attack made upon himself by one of the party journals of the day, that he "would rather protect the spirit of freedom which actuated its abuse." The European thought this strange; and attributed it perhaps to a natural desire on the part of the President to seem *not to feel* an evil which he could not remedy, or to a wish to astonish the aristocratic ears of his distinguished visitor. But it is better to have the too luxuriant growth of free principles, than the barrenness of despotism. Time and care may curtail properly the former; while seldom a change takes place in the latter save that each day the scene becomes more dreary, the desolation each day more complete. It is only by educating the people that the evil can be remedied,—and this too is the only rightful remedy. The partisan press in this country has more arms than the fabled Briareus, and is in effect possessed of ubiquity. Into the mansion of the rich, and the hovel of the poor, the halls of learning, and the haunts of ignorance, the newspaper finds its way at the same moment. With those, and unfortunately they are many, who are incapable of reflection, and depend upon the party press alone for their political opinions, its boldness of assertion is mistaken for candour, and its miserable manœuvres and paltry tricks seem the perfection of political talent; while its violence of vituperation is attributed to an honest zeal, on the part of its conductors, which knows no fear in a contest for the people's interests with those high in place and power. They do not see that poverty of knowledge requires from those who would seem wise, this boldness of assertion; that wilful misrepresentation is generally the source of its skill and success; and that the courage of their champions is but like the valor of the Venetian bravo, who with coward cruelty stabs his enemy in the dark, as the editor may launch in surety from his stool, his slanderous invectives, at the best and purest of the land, since, in his insignificance secure from notice, he is ingloriously safe from vengeance. They who exert a great influence upon society, should have interests at stake in some degree commensurate, which may serve to ensure a proper exercise of their power. But the editorial corps, the most influential in the country, is here, with a few distinguished exceptions, composed of men who have given no pledges to the community. A correction of the abuses of the press would be productive of an additional advantage. For so long as its present violence maintains in the minds of men a continual and increasing party excitement, no taste for

literary reading can possibly be formed. Excitement demands stimulus, and the people will turn in disgust from the learned elaborations of the scholar--the fancies of the poet, and the speculations of the philosopher, to the crowded columns which daily tempt their morbid appetites with the cannibal banquet of fresh falsehoods, new slanders, and an endless variety of the monstrous exaggerations of a prolific imagination quickened by the active impulse of partizan feeling. Only when this unnatural taste shall have been suppressed, can our literary journals be encouraged and supported by the public. The right of instruction, justly recognised here as sacred and indefeasible, is but a further extension of the principle of self government: and the existence of this right demands, and presupposes, for its proper exercise, such a degree of intelligence in the nation as will make it productive of good rather than of evil. It is evident that the most dangerous and disastrous consequences must ensue if the people can be continually deceived into an improper exercise of this right. It is the most powerful engine that a party can possibly bring into action; for the principle on which it is based, is one deservedly dear to us all, one for which our fathers fought, and one that their sons are jealous to preserve. The will of the people must be obeyed and they who urged by personal pique, or party pride, or actuated even by a disinterested regard for the public good, may have attempted to oppose it, will find that they have sacrificed themselves to struggle vainly, and but for a moment, against that which cannot be permanently resisted. It is right too that the people should have things done as they choose. The argument of those who assert, that they do not know so well as their representatives what should be done, is but a repetition of the reasoning of those who deny the capacity of mankind for self government and only proves what I have been endeavoring to establish,—that the people should be enlightened. With the many and serious causes for difference and jealousy between the several states composing this union, legislation must be here a matter of peculiar delicacy and uncommon difficulty; and this consideration too, apart from those which might be urged with reference to every democratic government, makes it still more important that the intelligence of the people, who wield here so powerful an influence, should be a guarantee against any rash or improper action on the part of their rulers. The founders of this government saw and acknowledged, the absolute necessity of enlightening the people,—and that on this alone depends the duration of our institutions. They endeavored in their several states, and near

their respective residences to promote a taste for mental culture. In New England primary schools, and academies, were founded in sufficient number for the immediate wants of the population; while colleges and universities were chartered at almost every session of the Northern legislatures. The good that has been done making general the benefits of education, and repressing, in the same ratio, the evils and vices consequent upon ignorance—is an earnest of after progress which must encourage to renewed exertions the energetic Northerners. It is to be regretted that the people of the South have not been as active in this respect as their neighbours. This is to be the more lamented as education is in the South a thing of peculiar interest and importance. From the nature of the Southern country—its slave population—and its agricultural character, it cannot, for many years at least, have such a representation in the national councils as will place it on a numerical equality with the Northern and Eastern states. It is then necessary, for the protection of the interests of the South, that in the discussion of the questions involving those interests, an equality of talent, and weight of character, and moral influence, should counterbalance the present preponderance and equalize the scales. Recent indications tell us too that unless this can be soon affected, our union justly, valued as it is by all may not last and should not endure.

Mr. Jefferson counselled us, and commenced himself the work. After his retirement to the quiet of private life, he seemed to feel that there was something still for him to do. He urged incessantly on the Legislature of his native state the adoption of a plan of education within the limits of its jurisdiction which should embrace every rank and class. He proposed the establishment of schools and academies in every town and county, with a central university to the studies of which last those of the former should be preparatory. The wisdom and policy of this scheme are obvious. We cannot expect the higher walks of science and literature to be attained by all. The original and constitutional differences of mind among men would prevent this. The inequalities of condition in the human family which Providence has ordered, forbid it too, with characteristic wisdom, and compensating kindness—since were the minds of all men equally enlightened and enlarged, an intelligence unsuited to their several spheres of life and action, would enable some to perceive too plainly and painfully the adventitious inferiorities which confine them to a station in society far below that of others who owe their elevated rank to accident and circumstance alone, as they to these their misfortunes and degradation.

A peasant, doomed to remain throughout his life, a “tiller of the earth” would be miserable with the pride of a prince—the feelings and fancy of a poet, or the varied and extensive knowledge of a philosopher. These differences of condition are not so marked here as in other countries, but they are natural, and must every where exist. But while every mind cannot, and, perhaps, for the reasons just mentioned, should not, aspire to embrace the universe of thought and truths, which the human intellect can, with the most favorable opportunities for improvement, readily enfold within its comprehensive grasp,—still every possible stimulus and advantage should be given to all.

The schools and academies proposed by Mr. Jefferson would have given these as general and uniform an extension, as was practicable or even necessary. The ambitious student would have found in the central college all the opportunities that he could have desired: while the indigent youths whose talents and industry, in the schools and academies, had justified hopes of future eminence and usefulness, might have been supported by the State, through a collegiate course; and this State patronage, properly administered would have been a powerful incentive to exertion in the primary departments, and could not have failed to impart life and activity to these branches of the system. Mr. Jefferson’s plan was not adopted as he wished; but he saw, before he died, the University of Virginia in active and efficient operation. Typifying with the varied combinations of its ornate architecture, the numerous beauties and perfections of its moral structure, we might imagine it to be a sculptured representation of the genius and greatness of ancient times. We fancy the odes of Anacreon, and the tuneful lyres of his country’s minstrels, echoing among Ionic columns as in days long while past—here the splendid conceptions of Corinthian and there of Dorian architects, with the rival glories of Corinth and Doris are called to mind; while while as we look upon a model of the Pantheon, with its rich and rare collection of the ornaments and excellencies of almost every order, we think of Rome,

* * * * * And the day

When Brutus made the dagger’s edge surpass
The conqueror’s sword in bearing fame away!
And immortal Tully’s voice,—Virgil’s lay,
And Livy’s pictured page:”——

and as the light of memory kindles thus into life a thousand inspiring associations, it may also, with a vivifying influence like that of the sun on Memnon’s magic statue, warm into renewed existence the spirit of heroism, and the soul of elo-

quence and poesy ! To use the words of Mr. Jefferson—“ the effect of this institution on the fame, fortune, and prosperity of our country can be seen as yet but at a distance,—but a hundred well educated youths whom it will turn out annually, will, ere long, fill its offices with men of superior qualifications, and will raise it from its humble station to an eminence among its associates which it has never yet known—no not even in its brightest days. This institution is now qualified to raise its youth to an order of science unequalled in any other institution,—and this superiority will be the greater from the free range of intellect encouraged there, and the restraints imposed at other seminaries by the shackles of a domineering hierarchy, and a bigoted adhesion to ancient habits. Our sister States will be also repairing to the same fountain of instruction, will bring hither their genius to be kindled at our fire, — and will carry back the fraternal affections which, nourished at the same *alma mater*, will knit us to them in the indissoluble bonds of *early personal friendships*. Virginia will be a centre of r alliance to the States whose youth she has educated, and as it were adopted—and the good “ *Old Dominion*,” *the blessed mother of us all*, will raise her head with pride among the nations,—and will present to them that splendor of genius which she has always possessed, but has too long suffered to rest uncultivated and unknown.” Let the plan proposed for Virginia be adopted by all the Southern States, and we will be able to enter on a more equal footing the lists of amicable controversy with our northern neighbors ; and if any unfortunate accident should weaken our Union, and oppose permanently our interests, we will be as respected as foes, as we were equal as friends. But this equality will tend more than any thing else to preserve us united, and to prevent the occurrence of the opposition mentioned. No trivial difference can part us. The necessity for a dissolution of the Union can only arise when one of its two great divisions shall have acquired the power, and manifested the will to oppress and injure the other. We have every thing to keep us united—the recollections of the past—the advantages of the present, and the hopes of the future. Our Federative system has thus far succeeded admirably. It was only of late that political economists were able to prove that human ingenuity and industry when most unshackled, were most productive, and it is only now that a similar principle in government has been established. The capability of man for self-government has never indeed until now been fairly tested. The democracy of Athens was an insensate mob—and in the Italian Re-

publics, and all other soi-disant popular governments of modern times, the sovereignty of the people was either a vain boast of fancied freedom, in which their leaders indulged them while their fetters were forging, or, being free, the people were ignorant and vicious, and on that account unable to govern themselves. It is now, and in America only, that the world has been presented with the sublime spectacle of a mighty people free from all restraints, save that of laws equal and just in their operation—enjoying their privileges not by the uncertain tenure of a charter wrung from the unwilling hands of despotism, but holding their liberties *in fee simple and unconditional*—a people too, at this moment infinitely more enlightened in the mass, than are the subjects of any King in Europe, governing themselves, and with the increase of knowledge among them, growing each day more capable of self-government. And can it be thought that this example will have no influence abroad? Europe may learn from us a lesson. On the old continent the progress of democracy is rapid. Let both Prince and people beware! Though Nicholas may insult with impunity a Polish deputation, or the citizens of Paris congratulate, with pretended joy, their King on his escape from assassination, the day of retribution for the wrongs of Poland, and the falsehoods of Philippe is fast approaching. Let Kings reflect ere it is too late. The storm of popular fury may disperse to-morrow the myrmidons which march now at their bidding. The sun that shines to-day on the glittering spires and gilded turrets of their palaces, may, when next it rises, light to view one universal ruin. The guillotine can again be mounted, and the streets of their ancient Capitals may once more run red with royal blood. Let the people pause! for until they are prepared to govern themselves, freedom will be anarchy, and worse than even the “tender mercies” of their Kings—for though their liberty

* * * * “Have the wings of the wind,
Of the wantonest air that the North can unbind—
Yet if health do not sweeten the blast with her bloom,
Nor virtue’s aroma its pathway perfume,
Unblest is the freedom and dreary the flight
That but wanders to ruin, and wantons to blight.”

Let them pause—because the spirit that now urges them on is the same disorganising demon which in France, under the specious seeming of a pious patriotism, led the deluded people on to sacrifice one by one their institutions, and to abandon one after another, the principles that secure the social compact—giving themselves each day more completely to its

purposes, in the vain hope that its flattering promises would be at last fulfilled—and the serenity of virtue, and the majesty of justice revealed to their anxiously expectant gaze, until, the veil withdrawn in the strife of the revolution, the vision of the startled victims was appalled too late by a sight more terrible than that which frightened from their last hope the despairing followers of the unmasked *Mokanna*—“features horribler than hell e’er traced on its own brood,”—vice in its naked deformity, and murder undisguised by the sophistries of false philosophy. Let both beware—because now a revolution by force must be fatal to the first, and cannot permanently advantage the last.

A struggle at this time in any country of Europe, between the people and the government, will not be a simple contest of the mere transfer of power ; it will not be local in its results, and the extended interests involved will make the strife as general as are these interests to be affected by its termination. It will be a war of free principles on one side—against tyranny, and a wide array of Kings, on the other. The holy alliance is not yet dissolved ; and the first sound of the *Marsielloise* will summon its soldiers to the field. We were too distant and too obscure to excite many fears or much attention. It was not thought that our country would so soon produce men whom Princes should fear to meet. The court of Versailles in revenging herself on her ancient enemy, saw not the injury which she was at the same time inflicting on the cause of royalty. But experience has at length taught caution to Kings. That in which a contest, however, the people must eventually conquer, cannot be doubted. France has long been ripe and ready for revolt—and the great and good Lafayette is no longer there with the magic wand of mind and moral influence, to charm to safe subsidence the tumultuous sea of popular commotion. The levelling principle is elsewhere progressing with increased rapidity.—O’Connell and his dishonest associates threaten soon to revolutionize England—whilst on the Peninsula, bloody wars and family feuds have changed to hate and contempt “the divinity which doth hedge a King.” The strife will doubtless be long and bloody, but the people must and will prevail. And if from this contest they rise reeking with fraternal blood, and furious from the slaughter—their prejudices freed from the restraint of reason, and their passions inflamed to frenzy—what can we anticipate but a renewal on a wider field of the horrors and failure of the French revolution—a subversion of all government—and a confusion of the elements of society, until at last the people, disgusted with

the licentiousness which they had mistaken for liberty, recall their Kings, satisfied to sacrifice principle to peace—or submit perhaps to some new Napoleon of the coming century who will rear again, on the ruins of royalty a dictatorial throne, from which to speak the fiat of fate to the world beneath him. Kings cannot prevent their subjects from being free; but they can prepare them for the blessings of liberty, and thus prevent their running into the excesses of licentious abandonment. And herein will they find their interest and their safety. The people will not prove ungrateful; and by giving freely that which they cannot long withhold—by a policy and government in accordance with the liberal spirit of the times—the affections of the people may be secured, and their rulers thus preserve, by its beneficial exercise, their own decaying power. The success or failure of our experiment will influence much the destiny of Europe. Kings turn on us a curious and inquiring gaze—the anxious people look to us for encouragement and example—and call earnestly for the fulfilment of the pledges which our fathers gave them. Let both then be instructed of our annals. With the fate of ourselves, of our posterity, and of the world perhaps, dependant on the preservation of our institutions, let us swear to guard them well! We have ourselves, fellow students, something to do in this. We are young as yet—but the time is rapidly approaching when we must assume a station on the stage of life, and engage in the performance of its active duties and business. The *Sylvæ Academi* must soon be to us but a green spot on “memory’s waste.” We can linger but a very little while longer in the pleasant places of science, pluck but few flowers, and wreath now not many garlands, as from the *Eden of the mind*, we take, like the first created, with painful regret our reluctant way. But if we leave with unwillingness the haunts of learning, and, still like Adam to engage in endless toil,—the Almighty has with us too kindly ordered that labour shall sweeten success.—There is an inseparable connection between our duty and our happiness. Virtue is even now and here its own reward.—And whether we are so unfortunate as to think we can reconcile it with the wisdom, and justice, and manifest benevolence of God, that he should have created man, in cruel sport, with a mind infinite in its conceptions, and equally illimitable in its aspirations,—with that mind and all its proud imaginings, ambitious hopes, and confident claims to immortality, to be narrowed down to life’s brief span, and quenched in the damps and darkness of the grave—or look beyond this scene of petty triumphs and trials, to a future world where, bask-

ing in the divine effulgence the soul of man may expand into the perfect realization of that glory and greatness of which here it can only dream, we must all acknowledge the duty and advantage of improving now, to the utmost, the faculties which have been given us to cultivate and not to neglect or abuse,—either to fulfil the purposes of our present existence, or to prepare for the high communion which may in after life await us, or to accomplish both these objects. The susceptibility of the mind for the enjoyment of happiness increases with its increased refinement. The cultivated intellect derives pleasure from a thousand objects, which, without this cultivation, would not have suggested a single pleasing association. And the happiness which depends on the improvement of man's mind is alone worthy of his nature.

In fulfilling the duties which we owe to ourselves, we will also prepare for the discharge of those that we owe to our country. We are individuals—but national character takes its color from individual traits—individual influence determines the nature of national exertions.

We have near us a “*Mecca*” at whose sacred shrine to kindle our zeal and inspire our hopes. On yonder mountain, which rears its head high above the surrounding elevations, rest the remains of THOMAS JEFFERSON—apart from the spacious splendour of cities—far from the noisy haunts of men, and sleeping undisturbed in the silence and solitude of nature. We feel as we gaze upon the height, that there should be the grave of JEFFERSON.

The rock of St. Helena is an appropriate resting place for Napoleon. The changing winds which shift around are just emblems of the inconstancy of his fortunes, who from the master of Kings, and the founder of dynasties became in a few brief weeks the unwilling hermit of the ocean. The fury of the tempest that tosses against his rocky tomb a thousand wrecks, calls to mind the fearful desolation that he carried so cruelly through the fairest provinces of Europe.—While the painful glare of Afrič's sun, in its meridian fervour, and its sudden obscuration, as it sometimes sinks in the wave, the storm howling awfully its requiem, may denote the splendor of his noon day successes, and the horrors of his after fate.

Not such the sepulchre of JEFFERSON! The breeze which fans its sides, and breathes through the surrounding foliage a mournful music, is scented with the fragrance of a hundred fields teeming with the rich luxuriance of western nature—and the fruits and flowers of a southern clime, whose

genial influences are aided by the kindly care of man. The storm that may rage below, reaches not the summit of the mountain ; and so was he who is there interred, above the prejudices, and superior to the weakness of human nature—as fixed and immovable in his principles as that mountain on its base. The sun hastens to shed its earliest rays, and lingers to leave its latest light upon his tomb—and as it descends slowly the mountain, tinging its top as it goes, with the mellow hues of evening, and casting on the clouds the rich purple of a summer sun-set, it but resembles the sage of Monticello, who sank even more gloriously to rest !

ERRATA.

5th. page 6th. line, for—congenial *to* the spirit, read—congenial *with* the spirit.

13th. page 15th. line from bottom, for—before *ever* the declaration, read—before *even* the declaration.

14th. page 12th line from bottom, the latin sentence is printed incorrectly in a part of the edition, it should be—*Quidquid, delirant reges plectuntur Achivi.*

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